"To claim that the infant is king in Ifaluk is not to exaggerate the situation at all. The infant is always in control of a social situation, and easily dominates the adults, bending them to his will. Two examples from my field notes will serve to illustrate this point. Talimera, the young man who became my interpreter, and I were interviewing Nautrimar, the mother of a baby about eighteen months old. Now Nautrimar and I were very close friends, and she was always eager to be of help to me, so that the obstreperous conduct of her baby daughter was not to her liking. The baby was running about the yard constantly, shouting, and generally creating a disturbance that made it all but impossible to continue with our interview. She would catch the baby, holding it in her arms, but it would soon leave her arms to run about. Talimera would pursue her, and hold her for a while, but she would soon leave him, so that her mother would have to chase her again, and pick her up. When the infant wanted to leave her mother's lap, however, she was not restrained, and would again run away, this time, being caught by her mother's sister. This little comedy act continued for the better part of an hour. All were mildly irritated by the child's behavior, but none made the slightest attempt to restrain her, verbally or physically. The baby was in complete control of the situation.

Another example is even more telling. Tiovis, a 15 month old boy, was brought to the canoe house by his maternal grandfather Auelimar.

During the half hour I remained in the canoe house, he perpetrated the following deeds, without the slightest display of anger on the part of the adults, or the smallest attempt to restrain him. Tiovis began by pushing his hands into the face of Auelimar, pulling his beard, and then shoving his hands under Auelimar's chin, so that the latter had to strain his neck upward. He then grabbed a pole and began to strike Mawaulimar, an olderly man, who saved himself by removing himself from the scene, sitting behind a canoe. Tiovis then began to play with the rope fibre that Auelimar had in his basket. It requires much time and patience to sort out the fibres, which are to be twisted into rope. Yet when Tiovis began to mess them up so that they became gnarled, Auelimar merely resorted them, and replaced them in the basket. Ramen, a young married man came into [94] the canoe house, and took Tiovis in his arms, whereupon the latter did to him what he had done to his grandfather--push his hands in his face, etc.

All this while, Tiovis is the center of attention, the men laughing at his antics, and having a merry time observing them. The theory behind this almost fantastic indulgence is that the baby is completely innocent, and is not responsible for its behavior. ('no savvy nothing.'). This theory is consistent with the lack of punishment of the child, but surely it need not prevent the adults from restraining some of the infant's behavior

which is both irritating and destructive. (11)"

"11. The same theory is employed to explain the indulgence of the whims and aggressions of the abnormal children. The latter often throw stones at others, which may seriously bruise someone, yet no attempt is made to restrain them, since they 'no savvy nothing.'"

28: Spiro--94 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 123, 858, 831 Ifalik

"It is to be expected that this pattern of indulgence induces a low threshold of frustration tolerance, so that if the infant is inhibited it reacts violently. One example, from many, will illustrate this point. As I entered a courtyard one day, a baby boy about two years old, came over to sit on my lap. He soon discovered the pencil in my pocket, and began to play with it. (12) After a time I took the pencil from him. This minor frustration caused him great grief. He shook his body and head violently, and then began to scream--a genuine temper tantrum. But the moment I returned the pencil the crying ceased, and he became all smiles. Yet again when I stood up to leave, he screamed violently, and would not be pacified."

"12. His play is irrelevant in this connection, but is of psychoanalytic interest. He repeatedly removed the pencil from my pocket and reinserted it. He would then place it between his thighs, and then stick either himself or me with it. This sequence continued for some time. It was obvious also, that he was 'playing for the gallery', since he would look to see if the people were observing him, and if he noticed that I was unattentive, he would give a shout of rage."

28: Spiro--94 [2] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 858, 865 Ifalik

"The generally accepted adult view of infants, therefore, has it that the infant is a powerless, innocent, creature, who must neither be restrained nor punished. The resultant adult behavior is one of indulgence, and little attempt is made to train the child until he can walk and/or talk."

28: Spiro--102 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians-1-2
116, 858, 561, 865 Ifalik

"The children in this group--between the latency period and pre-puberty are, unquestionably, the least favored group. The infants are pampered and overindulged. The pre-puberty children, though not indulged, have a favorable position. They are economic assets, and hence have the respect of their parents and adults. They enjoy many adult prerogatives, such as assistance in adult work, free mobility, and, in the case of the boys, a position of equality in the canoe houses, where they may lounge or work as of right, and not by sufferance. The intermediate group has none of these privileges. Furthermore, having been dethroned by the infant, they find themselves subservient to the older children. The latter order them around, have them fetch objects for them, etc.

This means that they have no visible means of ego support. The older children receive their emotional response from their peers, looking to them for esteem and affection, and together can pit themselves, if necessary, against the adult world. The younger children do not have that source. Having experienced a traumatic rejection they have not yet learned to establish genuine interractional patterns with their peers. Furthermore, they are still attempting to ingratiate themselves with their parents, and view their peers as possible threats to such attempts. Thus, as we shall soon see, there is much rivalry between the children for the attention of the adult, and aggression between

themselves. Since, children are instructed from the time they can speak that aggression is the most heinous offence, and they are punished should they fight, there would probably be much more of it were it allowed fuller expression."

28: Spiro--113
116, 858, 184

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Socialization involves not only the introjection of the values of the culture, it means also learning to participate in the institutionalized activities of the culture. From the moment the child is taken from the confines of his home, there is no cultural activity he may not witness; and, indeed, he is taken to them all. Whether it be a political meeting, a religious ceremony, a dance, an economic activity, the child, from infancy on, is a witness to the proceedings, for he is carried by his parents, when an infant, and walks himself, when he can do so. In short, there is no institutionalized facet of his culture that, in principle, is barred to the child. He begins to observe adults behavior, therefore, much before he begins to participate in the activities himself. This means, that in many instances, all that is lacking for his participation is the skill or strength, not the knowledge or information. His culture, therefore, is not a strange mystery from which he is excluded. He is never made to feel, except in the case of sex, that there are adult activities that, for inexplicable reasons, he may not share. He may and does share them, but full participation must await greater maturity. And when he does begin to participate actively in his culture, it is not as a sudden transition from one discrete category to another, a precipitate change from child to adult, an abandonment of one and an entry into a new and entirely different world. His cultural, as well as biological growth, is continuous, for his cultural participation increases concommittently with his biological maturation."

28: Spiro--113 [2]
116, 858, 535, 868

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Though the children are passive participants in almost all aspects of the culture, they do not become active participants until they can engage in the activity with some degree of competence. One of the first activities in which they engage is the dance. Boys and girls attend the dance rehearsals with their parents, and not only observe the dancers, but imitate them. The small tots are encouraged by the women to imitate the men dancers and they even actively induce them into the dance by guiding their arm and leg movement in the proper fashion. The boys, from about four or five years of age and up, participate in the dance itself, they are bedecked ornamentally as the men, and though their participation is not important for the performance, it does afford them an opportunity to engage in an adult activity. This means, of course, that it is unnecessary to teach the growing children the dance, because they first learn it by imitation and by actual participation as children, so that by the time they are ready to take their places as full-fledged members, they have mastered the technique."

28: Spiro--113-114
116, 462, 858, 562

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians-1-1
Ifalik

"In economic life, the children have certain responsibilities, though here there is an important sexual differential. The little girls begin to assume domestic responsibilities much before the boys, so that the boys of seven or eight may be seen playing in their gangs, while the girls at that age are at home, helping their mothers with the cooking, caring for a younger sibling, collecting flowers for garlands, etc. When a girl reaches the age that she wears a grass skirt, she becomes a mother surrogate to the younger children. She carries them with her, watches over their play, washes them, feeds them, and in general supervises their activities. A boy may, if he likes, perform any of these tasks, but a girl is delegated these responsibilities. The girl assists her mother in household work, helping her to clean the house, and helping in the cooking. By the time she is seven or eight, she is making threads for skirts. She actually does not begin to make or even assist in the making of skirts until after puberty, but she does tie the strips of bark into thread.

The boys this age have no definite economic responsibility, though they may and do assume some on their own initiative. For example, when the men prepare to go [114] fishing, the young four and five year old boys will assist in minor tasks, such as gathering coconut-midribs to be used as skids for the canoes, or to fetch some article which the men wish to use. As the boys get older, they begin to act on their own initiative, particularly with regard to fishing. Boys from the seventh or eighth years may be seen

going surf fishing with their fishing poles, or accompanying an older youth in lagoon fishing in canoes. The older pre-pubertal lads and young adolescents practically have a monopoly on one kind of fishing, the shore trap fishing for the small fish. There are certain seasons of the year when fish, the size of a sardine comes into the lagoon, which the natives catch in a stone trap, or in coconut traps, which they place in the water. Every morning, and some afternoons, the lads mentioned above are busy at work catching these fish. And, it is to be stressed, this is done without adult pressure or orders, but on their own initiative."

28: Spiro--114
116, 858, 476, 574

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"The children not only engage in economic activities, but they also assume adult social responsibilities. For example, if I were to enter a courtyard, the young girls offer me food, or the young boys would offer me part of the fish they had caught. But their culturally learned cooperative behavior extends to the more subtle aspects of the culture as well. One afternoon I was playing with the children, and the skies became overcast. The older girls became very concerned about me. If it should begin to rain, would I have some place to go? Perhaps I had better leave now before it begins to rain. Finally they had to go, but only after I reassured them that if it did rain I would seek shelter. These young girls were displaying a very important cultural value, concern for the welfare of the guest."

28: Spiro--114 [2]
116, 866, 858

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"This assumption of adult values and behaviors carries over into the freedom granted the child, the patterns of dependency in which he is trained. Children are not forced to go to sleep at an early time, but can stay up as long as the adults. They may even sleep away from home, if they have their parent's permission. But even the young men and women may not do so without permission. If a young man or woman is not home by nightfall, the parents are very concerned. This is understandable, since in a small island, someone is bound to see them at some time, and if they do not return and no one can tell of their whereabouts, chances are something has happened to them. But with permission, young and old children, alike, may sleep away from home."

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

whether they died in infancy (before they could walk) or later. The ninety-two women of childbearing age or older had had 255 children, of which 151 were still living. Of the 104 deaths, sixty were either stillbirths or infant deaths, which is a high infant mortality by modern Western standards, though probably lower than that of most of the crowded Oriental civilizations.

The menstrual history of every woman was public knowledge on Ifaluk because of the custom of retiring to the menstrual huts. Tufal for a woman, then, has the definite meaning that she has passed menopause, has completed her reproductive history. We got the reproductive history of twenty-eight of these elderly ladies. They had born a total of eighty children, or an average of 2.8 each. Eight of them had had no children; one of them had had ten; most had had two, three or four.

The Ifalukians, like most people who lack a written language or system of records, had amazing memories, and I think that our histories for these women are reasonably accurate. It is difficult to interpret them precisely, of course, because of our lack of data on movement to and away from the island, and the like. Clearly, however, the population is hardly maintaining itself. The Ifalukians loved children, seemed always to want children. I could not, however, get away from a suspicion that the low birth rate reflected some sort of deliberate contraceptive or control practice, beyond such conventional taboos as the prohibition of sexual intercourse during periods of fishing. The language problem, the delicacy of the subject and our reluctance to appear to be prying into personal matters, prevented us from getting any definite information.

The population question in the Pacific is a matter of general concern. All of the islands—Polynesian, Micronesian, Melanesian—showed a great decline in population through the 19th century. The islands had probably been almost free of contagious disease before the explorers, traders, whalers and other Westerners started roaming the Pacific, bringing smallpox, measles, venereal diseases, tuberculosis and the like along with them.

The consequences were devastating, and only in recent years have introduced medicine and sanitation started to counteract the effect of the introduced diseases. Until quite recently, I suspect that most cul-

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

The households varied greatly in size, from one which included only one old man and one old woman, to another (Falepenach) which had twenty-six persons. The household system was matrilineal, and when a man married he moved into the household to which his wife belonged. In the matter of what belonged to which household, a man generally seemed to know much more about the household of his mother than about the household of his wife, even though he had been living in the latter for many years. There was considerable informal movement among the households—people sometimes eating and sleeping regularly in a household to which they didn't really "belong"—which introduced a considerable element of confusion into the census making. This informality plus clan relationships and other family ties meant that labor was not strictly apportioned by household—the two old people who officially represented the smallest household were as well looked after as old people would be in a household with numerous members. Everyone really "belonged" to the whole island.

This matter of "belonging" had been on my mind ever since reading that thought-provoking short novel by Carson McCullers, *Member of the Wedding*. The "security" of the children of Ifaluk impressed us from the very beginning. Every child was a member not only of a family and a household, but of the whole island society. A child crying would be comforted by the nearest adult. Curiously, the children, though "secure", were far from obnoxious—in fact it would be difficult to imagine a more delightful bunch of kids. The "sibling rivalry" that seems to plague every American household was conspicuous by its absence—the mannerly, non-aggressive character of Ifaluk society extended even to the five-year-olds.

The security of the children of Ifaluk is probably still further increased by the widespread system of adoption. Ted found that over a third of the children of the island had been "adopted" by couples who were not their biological parents. When a couple for some reason wish another child, they go to a pregnant woman (who must be of the clan of either the adopting father or adopting mother) and ask if they may adopt the child when it is born. The request, it is said, is never refused. The adopting mother goes to the birth house with the real mother—all children are born in a special house, which is taboo to men—and stays there while the baby is born. The biological mother keeps the baby